

**San Francisco Department of Public Health
Feeling Good Project
Joint Steering Committee, California Nutrition Network
Farm Bill 2007 Listening Session
August 1, 2006 1 PM Sacramento, California**

Testimony:

Secretary Kawamura and Members of the Panel, my name is Laura Brainin-Rodriguez. I work for the San Francisco Department of Public Health as Coordinator of the Feeling Good Project, funded by the California Nutrition Network. In addition, I am a member of the Joint Steering Committee of the California Nutrition Network and I represent San Francisco, in the Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative, composed of agencies and organizations serving six San Francisco Bay Area counties.

I am honored to be here to talk to you about the Farm Bill, but before I begin I would like to acknowledge and thank Secretary Kawamura and the California Department of Food and Agriculture's hard work in support of 5 a Day messages and the California Nutrition Network. I would also like to recognize the vision, leadership and innovation the California Nutrition Network has brought to the task of improving the health of California's most vulnerable residents.

The Feeling Good Project conducts nutrition education programs at grocery stores, farmer's markets, festivals, schools, community based organizations and direct health care agencies reaching over 40,000 individuals a year. We partner with over 75 agencies and organizations to reach our target audience of low-income San Francisco residents.

A Strong Farm Bill can improve the health of all Americans, by supporting program integration and improved service delivery. Promotion of evidence based public health approaches to the epidemic of poor health outcomes seen in low-income California residents, can decrease health care expenditures and increase quality of life.

I will focus my remarks today on three areas:

1. Efforts to Enhance and Expand Food Stamp Nutrition Education Modalities:

- o We recommend that the mission and scope of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program be defined, to focus on the most effective interventions to achieve behavior and environmental changes. This will assist food stamp recipients and eligible populations to eat healthful diets that include a wide variety and greater amount of fruits and vegetables, consistent with the USDA Dietary Guidelines.
- o In ethnic communities, the reach of mass media is great, with over 90% of Latinos and Chinese Americans tuning into Spanish and Chinese Radio and TV. To impact health practices and promote healthy lifestyles in these communities, it

is essential to use radio and TV, which are the most far reaching and effective modalities.

- o **We recommend that nutrition education through media be allowed, without burdensome requirements that over 50% of the audience be proven to be low income, since low income people listen to and view the same radio and TV stations as higher income people.**
- o Low income residents are widely dispersed throughout cities and counties and travel through broad geographical areas in the course of schooling and employment.
- o **We recommend that nutrition education messages be allowed in principal known corridors of travel, without the requirement that over 50% of the residents of the community in which these message are placed, be proven to be low income.**

2. Efforts to Promote Coordination and Cross-Referral between all USDA supported Food Assistance Programs

- o The low income California families who participate in the National School Lunch and Food Stamp Programs are often eligible for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) or the Supplemental Food Programs.
- o By allowing cross promotion between all USDA Food Assistance Programs we eliminate barriers to participation and enhance service delivery to low income California families.
- o **We recommend that all programmatic restrictions to cross promotion and referrals to USDA Federal Food Assistance Programs be eliminated.**

3. Efforts to Support Evidence Based Community Based Interventions to Change Eating and Physical Activity Behaviors that Result in Better Health.

- o Research has demonstrated that when the environment supports health, people are more likely to make healthy choices. We need multiple approaches to give families in San Francisco and California the tools they need, to achieve the health behaviors we are promoting.
- o We need the ability to work with community partners and programs whose goals are to improve access to pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly modes of travel, so that physical activity can be an integral part of going to work and school, while supporting better health and reducing air pollution.
- o **We recommend that programmatic barriers be eliminated to working with community partners, to bring about policy and environmental changes that result in increased access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity for low income California residents.**
- o By working with community partners and school communities to bring about full implementation of the School Wellness Policies mandated by the USDA Child Nutrition and Reauthorization Bill of 2004, we increase the likelihood that our nutrition messages are delivered in environments where these positive behaviors can actually take place.

- o **We recommend that all programmatic barriers, to full participation in the promotion of School Wellness Policies be eliminated, since by improving school environments, we effectively impact all school aged low income California residents.**

To summarize we recommend that:

- o **Nutrition Education through media be allowed without burdensome requirements that over 50% of the audience be proven to be low income.**
- o **Nutrition education messages be allowed in principal known corridors of travel, without the requirement that over 50% of the residents of that community be proven to be low income.**
- o **All programmatic restrictions to cross promotion and referrals to USDA Federal Food Assistance Programs, be eliminated.**
- o **Programmatic barriers to working with community partners, to bring about policy and environmental changes that result in increased access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity for low income California residents, be eliminated.**
- o **Programmatic barriers, to full participation in the promotion of School Wellness Policies be eliminated, since by improving school environments, we effectively impact all school aged low income California residents.**

I thank you for this opportunity to share our programs, which impact our food stamp eligible families. We ask that you provide your continued support to help our low income families choose healthier foods and active lifestyles.